

1889.

NEW ZEALAND.

BOTANIC GARDEN BOARD, 1888-89.

(TWENTIETH ANNUAL REPORT).

Presented to both Houses of the General Assembly by Command of His Excellency.

BOARD meetings during the past year were held on the following dates: 23rd July, 1888; 15th January, 11th February, 8th March, and 14th May, 1889.

The statement of accounts shows that the expenditure for the twelve months is £261 1s. 11d., and, excepting the sum of £15 9s. 3d., the whole of this has been laid out in the work of repairing the fences, cleaning the roads and paths, underbrushing, and miscellaneous labour.

The revenue of the Board is derived entirely from the share of the rents of the Town Belt, the amount received being £279 10s. 1d. for the eighteen months ending the 31st March, 1889.

From the Treasurer's statement it will be seen that there is a balance in hand of £88 7s. 3d.

The following correspondence has taken place between the Board and the Government relative to an application of the Corporation of the City of Wellington for the transfer to that body of the Botanic Garden.

Approved by the Board.

W. B. D. MANTELL, Chairman.

5th August, 1889.

JAMES HECTOR, Manager.

ACCOUNTS.—BOTANIC GARDEN, 1888-89.

<i>Receipts.</i>	£ s. d.	<i>Expenditure.</i>	£ s. d.
Balance in hand on 4th September, 1889 ..	79 0 10	Garden work, including keeper's salary, nursery work, roads, &c.	254 14 5
Share of rents from Wellington Town Belt for eighteen months, ending 31st March, 1889	279 10 1	Timber, ironwork, and carpenter's work (repair of cottage)	15 9 3
		Balance in hand	88 7 3
	£358 10 11		£358 10 11

W. T. L. TRAVERS, Honorary Treasurer.

CORRESPONDENCE.

Mr. G. S. COOPER to the CHAIRMAN, Botanic Garden Board.

SIR,—

Colonial Secretary's Office, Wellington, 1st April, 1889.

I have the honour to inform you that a deputation from the City Council of Wellington waited on the Government on the 16th ultimo, and urged that the Botanic Garden Reserve should be placed under the control of, and should be vested in, the City Corporation. The Premier, in reply, stated that the Government would endeavour to give effect to the wish of the City Council in the matter if, after inquiry, it was found that there were no objections thereto.

I am now directed by the Colonial Secretary to state that, before taking any steps in the direction indicated by the City Council, Government would be glad to have an opportunity of considering the views of the Board of Governors of the above-named reserve in relation to the project.

The Chairman, Wellington Botanic Garden Board.

I have, &c.,
G. S. COOPER.

Sir J. HECTOR to the UNDER-SECRETARY.

SIR,— Botanic Garden Board, 5th April, 1889.
I have the honour to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 1st instant, informing me that a deputation from the City Council had urged that the Botanic Garden Reserve should be vested in the City Corporation.

A meeting of the Botanic Garden Board will be called at an early date to consider this letter, but, in order to bring the question before the Board, it occurs to me that it would be advisable that you should furnish a statement of the reasons which were brought forward in support of the project, and which, I presume, led the Premier to state that Government would endeavour to give effect to the wishes of the City Council.

The Under-Secretary.

I have, &c.,
JAMES HECTOR.

Mr. G. S. COOPER to Sir J. HECTOR.

SIR,— Colonial Secretary's Office, Wellington, 9th April, 1889.
I have the honour to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 5th April, acknowledging the receipt of my letter of the 1st instant, and asking that you might be furnished with a statement, for the information of the Botanic Garden Board, of the reasons which induced the Premier to state that Government would endeavour to give effect to the application of the Wellington City Council for the transfer of the Wellington Botanic Garden to the citizens of Wellington.

In reply, I am directed by the Colonial Secretary to inform you that the arguments relied upon by the deputation from the Wellington City Council which waited upon the Premier on the 16th March were mainly the following: (1.) That, as nearly the whole of the funds at the disposal of the Botanic Garden Board are supplied by the city, the City Council should have the control of the expenditure. (2.) That in the opinion of the deputation the garden was falling into decay from neglect of the works necessary to keep it in proper order. (3.) That, in the event of the transfer being made, the Borough Council would be prepared to increase the present grant to an amount sufficient to keep the garden in good order.

Sir James Hector, K.C.M.G.

I have, &c.,
G. S. COOPER.

Sir J. HECTOR to the Hon. the COLONIAL SECRETARY.

SIR,— Botanic Garden Board, Wellington, 28th May, 1889.
In reply to your letters of the 1st and 9th April last, regarding the proposal made by a deputation from the City Council of Wellington that the Botanic Garden Reserve should be placed under the control of and vested in the City Corporation, I am directed by the Board of Governors to explain that the delay in considering the suggestion has arisen from the difficulty in obtaining a quorum of the Board, owing to the absence of some of the members.

I am now instructed to forward the following resolution and the enclosed memorandum to which it refers: "*Resolved*, that this Board dissents from the reasons given by the deputation as being in some respects incorrect and not affording sufficient grounds for making the proposed transfer, and directs that the Manager should reply to this effect, at the same time narrating the position that the Board occupies in relation to the reserves under its control."

The Hon. the Colonial Secretary, Wellington.

I have, &c.,
JAMES HECTOR.

THE following is a brief abstract of the circumstances under which the various reserves now comprised in the Wellington Botanic Garden have become vested in the Board:—

In 1866, or soon after the establishment of the seat of Government in Wellington, it was represented to the Government that important results for the benefit of the colony might follow the establishment of a garden that would form the basis of operations for a system of forest propagation throughout New Zealand. These views were urged in Parliament, especially by Messrs. Mantell and Travers, and the late Messrs. Ludlam and Potts, and were cordially supported by the Premier, Sir Edward Stafford.

The result was that a small strip of land, thirteen acres in extent, which had been set apart in the original survey of the Wellington Settlement as a Botanic Garden, but which had never been used for that purpose, nor conveyed to any managing body, was brought under the provisions of the Public Domains Act, as amended in 1863, and the Governor's powers respecting the same were delegated by Order in Council to the Director of the Geological Survey (*Gazette*, 1868, p. 506). Persons illegally occupying the reserve were warned off it, and a portion of the area was enclosed as a nursery-ground, in which the trees and shrubs were reared which are now growing round Government House, Parliament Buildings, and the official residences, the expense being defrayed by the Colonial Government without any special vote or grant.

In 1869 the Botanic Garden Board was established by Act, and the reserve referred to was conveyed to it by Crown grant, dated 22nd November, 1869.

In 1871 an Act was passed providing, amongst other things, for extending the area of the Botanic Gardens; and, by the exercise of the powers conferred by this Act, a portion of the land

originally surveyed as part of the Town Belt, but since 1852 known and set apart as the "Wesleyan Reserves," was, on the 13th March, 1874, conveyed by the Superintendent of the Province of Wellington to the Botanic Garden Board for the same purpose as the original Botanic Garden.

In 1873 the Town Belt, which since 1861 had been managed by Commissioners appointed by the Superintendent, was, in exercise of power conferred upon the Superintendent of Wellington by the Acts of 1871 and 1872, with the exception of certain portions which were reserved as sites for the purpose of Hospital, Lunatic Asylum, College, and Signal-station, conveyed to the Mayor, Councillors and burgesses of the City of Wellington in trust, for purposes of public utility to the town of Wellington and its inhabitants, and with power to let the same for depasturage only. The revenue from such rents was by the Act of 1872 directed to be expended as follows: One-half towards the construction and maintenance of roads through the Belt, and the other half towards the ornamental planting of the lands referred to in the Act, but one-third of the last-mentioned half thus derived was to be paid to the Board of Governors of the Botanic Garden, to be spent by them in the ornamentation and utilisation of the land conveyed to them by the deed of 1874.

In March, 1875, a further extension of the area under the control of the Board was obtained by arrangement with the Cemetery Trustees, but this arrangement is entirely a matter of good-will, the land being neither conveyed or leased to the Board.

The area thus secured under the foregoing conditions has a total extent of ninety-three acres.

During the past twenty years the Board has expended, in the development of the garden, as a local domain and as a centre of distribution for forest growth, the sum of £7,627 5s. 10d., derived as follows: Government grants, £4,432 5s. 9d.; produce of sales and for services, £714 13s. 4d.; share of Town Belt rents since 1874, £2,539 17s. 9d.

The details of the receipts and expenditure during the period specified are hereto appended, and it will be found that in its operations the Board has always kept in view the fact that its resources are both local and colonial, and has, in the expenditure of the funds at its disposal, always allocated a fair proportion towards the ornamenting and utilising of the land granted to it by the deed of 1874.

During the above period a report of the operations of the Board and balance-sheet has been presented annually to Parliament, and published.

The chief works of improvement have been 250 chains of fencing for boundary and subdividing purposes; 400 chains of paths, graded and formed; 70 fixed seats, substantially made of totara; and cottages for the gardener and ranger; a nursery-ground, with shelter-houses, water supply, and other appliances, in which about 200,000 trees and shrubs have been raised from seed. Fifteen thousand of these trees have been planted in the gardens, and the remainder distributed, either free or at a small charge to cover the expense of packing, to various public domains and private persons throughout the colony. Experiments in the growth of various economic plants have been conducted and reported on. A native garden, botanically arranged, containing indigenous flora, has been laid out.

These constitute the chief items of initial outlay which have been incurred, and the current expenditure is chiefly for the cleaning of shrubberies and walks and maintenance of the paths and fences.

From the foregoing it appears that the city never has had vested in it any portion of the land occupied by the garden; nor has the city out of its revenues ever supplied any portion of the funds. That more than two-thirds of the expenditure which has created the valuable property now vested in the Board has been derived from general colonial and not from local sources, the citizens of Wellington, as such, having never contributed to the maintenance of the garden, while they have enjoyed its use.

The opinion expressed by the deputation that the garden is neglected and falling into decay is contrary to the opinion of visitors who are qualified to judge of such matters. It is probably founded on an imperfect apprehension of the direction in which the funds should be expended under the circumstances.

The Board is, of course, not in a position to express any opinion respecting the promise of the deputation that the Borough Council will increase the expenditure on the garden if it is transferred to its control. If it is contemplated to provide such increase by a further charge on the Town Belt rents it must be borne in mind that during the last seventeen years the Borough Council, as trustees for these rents, has collected the sum of £17,095 8s. 10d. Deducting the sum of £2,539 17s. 9d, which has been received by the Botanic Garden Board, there remains the sum of £14,555 11s. 1d., which has been expended by the Borough Council on the Town Belt, and a contrast between the work done by this expenditure on the Town Belt with that on the Botanic Garden might raise the question of which management has been most efficient and economical.

From inquiries which have been made it does not appear that in any case has a Domain or Botanic Garden been vested in any city Corporation. In the case of Auckland and Dunedin, the Corporation has been, by Proclamation, made a Domain Board under the Public Domains Act. In Christchurch, as in Wellington, the Domain is in charge of a Board appointed under special Act.

The following is a comparative statement of the position of the four principal city Domains:—

—			Extent.	Revenue.	Source.	Management.
			Acres.	£		
Auckland	...	...	196	400	Rents	Borough Council as Domain Board.
Wellington	...	...	93	180	Rents	Board under special Act.
Christchurch	...	...	430	462	Rents	Board under special Act.
Dunedin	...	...	41	450	Borough funds	Borough Council as Domain Board.

The following schedule gives the total classified receipts and expenditure of the Botanic Garden Board from 1869 to 1888-89:—

<i>Receipts.</i>		£	s.	d.	<i>Expenditure.</i>		£	s.	d.
From Trustees — 1869-70, £180 16s. 3d.;					Fencing .. .. .	..	356	17	6
1870-71, £120; 1872-73, £109 19s. 2d. ..	410	15	5	Planting .. .. .	..	943	7	10	
Votes by Parliament — 1870-71, £300;				Paths, seats, &c. .. .. .	..	512	17	3	
1871-72, £300; 1872-73, £300; 1873-74,				Buildings .. .. .	..	409	12	0	
£300; 1874-75, £300; 1875-76, £300;				Labour .. .. .	..	4,973	7	8	
1877-78, £300; 1878-79, £300; 1879-80,				Miscellaneous (tools, &c.) .. .. .	..	431	3	7	
£300; 1880-81, £100; 1881-82, £121 10s.				Balance in hand, 9th May, 1889 ..	..	59	11	0	
4d.; 1882-83, £200; 1883-84, £200;									
1884-85, £100	3,421	10	4						
Votes by Provincial Council — 1874-75,									
£300; 1876-77, £300	600	0	0						
Grant in aid of flax from Commissioners,									
1870-71	50	0	0						
Grant from Wellington Philosophical									
Society, 1870-71	50	0	0						
City Reserve rents — 1873-74, £93 9s.;									
1874-75, £93 9s.; 1875-76, £93 9s.;									
1876-77, £93 9s.; 1877-78, £231 6s. 9d.;									
1878-79, £154 2s. 6d.; 1879-80, £94 8s. 8d.;									
1880-81, £184 18s. 2d.; 1881-82, £259 4s.									
4d.; 1882-83, £73 2s. 9d.; 1883-84,									
£246 10s. 3d.; 1884-85, £178 12s. 1d.;									
1885-86, £183 16s. 8d.; 1886-87, £298 7s.									
9d.; 1887-88, £90 1s. 11d.; 1888-89,									
£171 9s. 11d.	2,589	17	9						
Sale of plants	407	12	10						
Sale of hay	207	0	6						
Total	£7,686	16	10						
							£7,686	16	10

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